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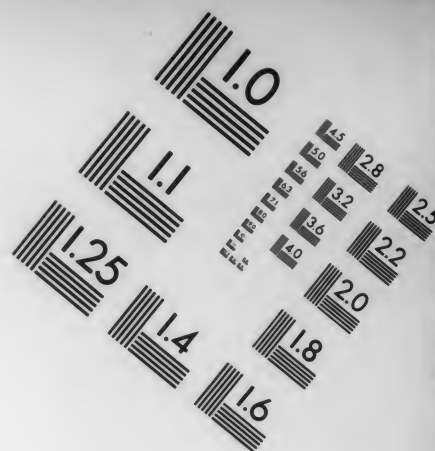
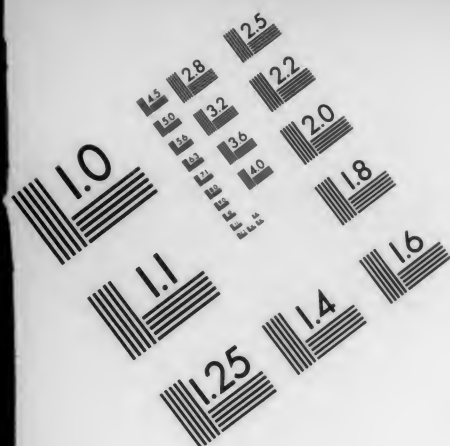
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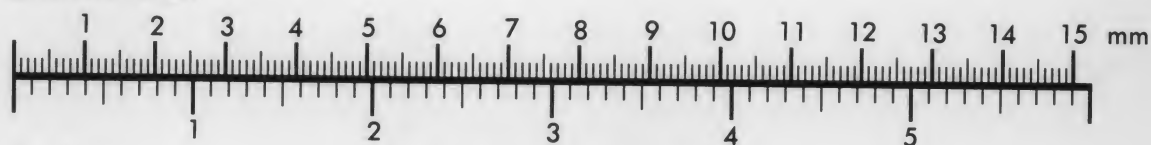
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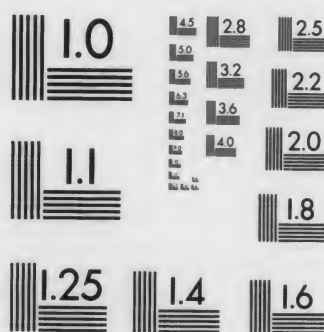
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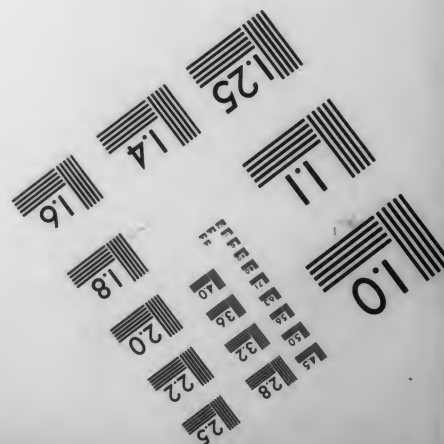
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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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NUMBER 191

## ON TEACHING VIRGIL<sup>1</sup>

H. H. YEAMES  
Hobart College, Geneva, New York

*O degli altri poeti onore e lume,  
vagliami il lungo studio e il grande amore  
che mi ha fatto cercar lo tuo volume.*

—DANTE, *Inferno*, I, 88.

Culture is like religion, a thing about which one should not be dogmatic. Both words have been much abused: the scorers of the one thing, like the professors of the other, have too often thought they have to do merely with externals—a form of observance, a mode of speech, an attitude of mind. In reality, one like the other lies at the very heart of life and feeds the springs of character itself. It is a still, small voice not to be heard in the din of the marketplace, a fragrant flower that cannot bloom in traffic-trodden ways. It is one of those greatest things more real for their indefiniteness and intangibility, more potent for their very lack of show and noise.

The cultivated man is not merely the gentleman of taste and refinement, with intellectual resources to occupy his leisure hours, but the "humane" man, the highest development of the human being, because his outlook upon life is broader, his sympathy is deeper, his interest in what men are doing now is more enlightened,

<sup>1</sup> A paper read, in part, at the annual meeting of the New York State Classical Teachers' Association at Syracuse, December 30, 1910.



for his understanding of what men have thought and said and done in the past. Literature is the worthy record of what men have thought and said and done in the past. It forms therefore the chief element of culture, the chief subject of education.

For culture is the true end of higher education—culture, and not practical efficiency: that is the ideal of technical or professional training. Lovers of literature, needless to say, hold culture to be not only the broadest but also the surest foundation for the highest type of efficiency; they hold that vision should precede service, and that “where there is no vision the people perish.”

One cannot answer those who do not agree with this ideal: he would be speaking in an unknown tongue. Such extravagant attacks upon the classics as are made by a college professor in a recent number of the *Popular Science Monthly* call for no rejoinder, because the writer shows himself beforehand temperamentally incapable of understanding the other side. We have to let such words pass—*non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa*—regretting only that a serious journal should choose to print them. Would it print (let us suggest) an equally sincere plea from a student of literature with no taste for scientific studies, and therefore no sympathy with them, who nevertheless felt called upon to assert that science is without educational value? Sympathy and understanding are the very prerequisites for any just judgment. He who, lacking these, sets himself up for a critic provokes retort in Horace’s pithy and pregnant phrase, *Lucum ligna putas*. When a man has eyes only for firewood or marketable timber, he will feel contempt rather than admiration for the sacred grove with the mystery and beauty of its inviolable trees. No argument will purge such blear-eyed vision: it needs collyrium; or is it hellebore?

As to the old and outgrown quarrel of modern versus ancient languages, which this same writer tries to pick up again—here he may be answered. The scholar whose work lies in modern languages will be the first to grant that no adequate knowledge of his subject is possible without some acquaintance with the linguistic and literary sources. Modern literature is unintelligible without Greece, modern language is inexplicable without Rome. Translation, we are told, will suffice to give acquaintance with ancient

literature, at least; but how much more true this is of modern literature! English versions of French and German classics are far more satisfactory than translations from Greek and Latin, because modern modes of thought and expression, and modern verse-forms have much in common; whereas no ancient poet has been rendered in a way to satisfy those who know him. Each fresh attempt recalls Bentley’s alleged remark on Pope’s *Iliad*: “A pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer.” Much as we admire or enjoy such translators of Virgil as Dryden, Conington, Fairfax-Taylor, or Mr. Theodore Williams, no one of them, nor all together, can more than suggest his essential quality: his magic remains incommunicable. If one must get great literature through the unsatisfying medium of translation, it is far better that the modern literatures should come to him that way; both because they are essentially less great than the ancient, and because translators can do them greater justice. I cannot help adding that the classicist is more likely to have a fair reading-knowledge of modern languages, a fair acquaintance with modern literatures, than is the modernist to have first-hand acquaintance with the classics.

This, however, is an aside. Any definition of culture, however undogmatic, will include some knowledge of literature and some appreciation of poetry, the consummate flower of literature. Next to our own English literature in richness and value to us is that of the ancient world, those books which men have agreed to call the Classics; and among these Virgil occupies a unique and for us a pre-eminently important place—a position in no way affected by the general superiority of Greek over Roman literature. He remains one of the few books, like the Bible, Shakespeare, Homer, Plato, and Dante, indispensable to culture in even the narrowest conception of it.

The reasons for this high eminence are various. In the first place, he at once became a classic and accordingly a model for study in school. It was probably in his lifetime that Caecilius Epirota, “fond nurse of tender bardlings” (*tenellorum nutricula vatium*, as Domitius Marsus called him), began to teach his poems.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *De gram.* 16.

And this position he has held ever since, in one unbroken tradition coming down through the Middle Ages—in whose darkness he was almost the only light—to our own day and to us *penitus toto divisos orbe*.<sup>1</sup> To the dominion of his poems the gods have set no bounds of space or time:

his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono,  
imperium sine fine dedi.<sup>2</sup>

The signs of the times seem to promise an increase rather than any decline of interest in Virgil. His place in the curriculum would therefore seem secure, and the service he is destined to render to countless generations still is no less than that he has performed for the nineteen centuries past. The loving study of such a poet is in itself a liberal education.

His position in the schools is due, of course, not to the influence of schoolmasters, but to his recognized rank in literature. He is in a sense the first of modern poets and the last of the great ancients; he stands alone on the height which divides and yet unites the old and the new worlds. All the streams of ancient song are tributary to his genius, and his own poetry is the fountain-head of many a river that has refreshed European lands. He enshrined in imperishable verse the great ideals of a great civilization; he was not only the poet of a great epoch, but also an epoch-making poet. In him the Graeco-Roman civilization found its truest interpreter, and chiefly through him handed down its legacy of inspiration to the modern world. "He is the great mediator between antiquity and Christendom; he maintained in poetry equally with Plato in philosophy the unbroken continuity of the human spirit," says Professor Woodberry,<sup>3</sup> in words that suggest the phrase of the Emperor Alexander Severus, who called Virgil "the Plato of poets,"<sup>4</sup>

It is not easy to recall any great poet since Virgil's day who has not caught some inspiration from him; and if the future has great poets in store, his torch will be passed on from hand to hand, the

<sup>1</sup> *Ec.* 1. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Aen.* 1. 279.

<sup>3</sup> Essay on Virgil, in *Great Writers*.

<sup>4</sup> "Vergilium autem Platonem poetarum vocabat ejusque imaginem cum Ciceronis simulacro in secundo larario habuit" (*Lampridius* 31). Of Virgil and Plato the same legend is related, how bees settled on their infant lips.

royal Virgilian line will "stretch out to the crack of doom." And what a line it is! Lucan and Statius, Dante and Tasso, Spenser and Milton, Dryden and Pope, Wordsworth and Tennyson are only a few among his disciples. He is like his own oak tree, standing unmoved by time or storm, with roots drawing nurture from all that is best in the past, with branches outspread in every direction to the upper air and bearing leaves "for the healing of the nations":

quantum vertice ad auras  
aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.  
ergo non hiemes illam, non flabra neque imbres  
convellunt; inmota manet, multosque nepotes,  
multa virum volvens durando saecula vincit.  
tunc fortis late ramos et brachia tendens  
huc illuc, media ipsa ingentem sustinet umbram.<sup>1</sup>

Poetry can never outgrow his influence; in fact, such influence is a stream which deepens though diffused, fed by the showers and tributary springs. As Pope sings in Virgilian strains:

Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,  
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;  
Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,  
Destructive war and all-involving age.  
See, from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!  
Hear, in all tongues consenting paeans ring!  
Hail, bards triumphant, born in happier days,  
Immortal heirs of universal praise!  
Whose honors with increase of ages grow,  
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow.<sup>2</sup>

Virgilian accents, but "oh, how frail to that large utterance of the early gods!"—*magnanimi heroes, nati melioribus annis*.

But it is not poets only who have felt his influence: his impress is on great men of every sort, of every land and time, and on great movements too. It would be hard to overestimate the influence on Christian thought of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. The mysterious fourth Eclogue has had more effect on men's minds than any other short poem ever written. According to Eusebius, who ought to know, it was instrumental in the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, and Gibbon with customary irony suggests that "Virgil may deserve to be ranked among the most successful missionaries

<sup>1</sup> *Georg.* 2, 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Criticism*, 181.

of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup> Part of Pope's sonorous paraphrase retains a place in our hymnbooks, and is sung at the Christmas season in many a Christian church<sup>2</sup>—a unique tribute to a pagan poet, sole survival of that mediaeval regard for Virgil as a prophet and almost a Christian, in Dante's memorable words, "as one who goes by night and carries the light behind him, and profits not himself, but after him makes men wise."<sup>3</sup> This feeling culminated in the legend of St. Paul's visit to the tomb of Virgil on Posilippo hill, after his landing at Puteoli. In the often-quoted words of a hymn sung as late as the fifteenth century:

Ad Maronis mausoleum  
ductus, fudit super eum  
piae rorem lacrimae;  
quem te (inquit) reddidissem,  
si te vivum invenissem,  
poetarum maxime.<sup>4</sup>

A legend this, but suggestive of what is profoundly true—the intimate connection between Virgil's teaching and Christian thought: our poet has his place among the Fathers.

The vision of a universal empire of righteousness and peace uniting all nations in one ideal was conceived by Virgil and given imperishable form. This great conception has been as potent as any human thought—far more potent, for instance, than the magnificent abstractions of Plato's *Republic*, great as the influence of that book has been on men's minds—and has helped to shape such vast historic structures as the Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Catholic Church. The poet who could give voice to such an ideal, in strains of the noblest poetry ever written, combining the beauty and finish of Greek art with the martial stateliness of the Roman genius, pre-eminent in war and law, and with something of the moral fervor of Hebrew prophecy, is certainly one of the

<sup>1</sup> *Oratio Constantini*, chaps. 19–21. Vide Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits littéraires*, t. III, "Virgile et Constantin le grand"; and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Rise, crowned with light," etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Purg.* 22, 67:

facesti come quei che va di notte,  
che porta il lume retro e sè non giova,  
ma dopo sè fa le persone dotte.

<sup>4</sup> Comparetti, *Virgil in the Middle Ages*, p. 98.

world's great poets. No wonder that Augustine, the author of *De civitate dei*, felt such passionate love for him; or that Dante, the author of the *De monarchia*, with a reverence that was almost worship, acknowledged him as his master in his own great poem, which marks the awakening of the modern world and enshrines forever the faith of the Middle Ages. "Apollo and Neptune (says Horace in one of Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*) by their united power raised the walls of Troy; Virgilius single-handed will have raised an imperishable Rome."

Virgil's "image and superscription" are stamped on so many minds, not merely because he has always been studied at school, but because his verse is of a sort that one must needs love as well as admire. So it happens that Virgilian words, phrases, and lines have become, more than any other poet's, "the chosen coin of fancy," rich in accumulated association. Sainte-Beuve in his delightful way suggests that some editor should do for Virgil what has been done for Homer, point out the memorable occasions in which his verses have played a part by means of some happy allusion or citation—"a pretty chapter of Virgilian amenities."<sup>1</sup> We wish that he had lived to write this chapter. Here I can only suggest, in the hastiest way, a fraction of what it might contain.

Such allusions range all the way from the motto of one of our very newest states (Oklahoma)—*labor omnia vincit*<sup>2</sup>—back through the ages to the admiring and conceited exclamation attributed by an impossible fiction to Cicero when he heard one of the *Eclogues* recited, and appropriated by Virgil from him—*magnae spes altera Romae*.<sup>3</sup>

The infinite pathos of Dido's plaint—*hoc solum nomen quoniam de conjuge restat*<sup>4</sup>—is enhanced when we learn that Virgil himself

<sup>1</sup> *Nouveaux lundis*, t. XI, "Œuvres de Virgile": Je m'étais souvent proposé ce joli chapitre d'aménités virgiliennes.

<sup>2</sup> *Georg.* I, 145.

<sup>3</sup> *Aen.* 12, 168. The story is told in the *Life* attributed to Donatus, 41: ac cum Cicero quosdam versus audisset, et statim acri judicio intellexisset non communi vena editos, jussit ab initio totam Eclogam recitari; quae cum accurate pernotasset, in fine ait, *magnae spes altera Romae*: quasi ipse linguae Latinae spes prima fuisset et Maro futurus esset secunda. quae verba postea Aeneidi ipse inseruit.

<sup>4</sup> *Aen.* 4, 324.



faltered as he read it.<sup>1</sup> At his reading with such wonderful feeling and charm before Augustus and his sister the passage about young Marcellus—the most touching lines in all poetry—Octavia fainted away.<sup>2</sup> What indignation on one occasion Augustus put into the great line, *Romanos rerum dominos gentemque togatam!*<sup>3</sup> Crazy Caligula in one of his burlesque campaigns impersonated Aeneas and sacrilegiously exhorted his men with *durate et vosmet rebus servate secundis*.<sup>4</sup> To Nero in his craven fear of death one of his officers flung the scornful question, *usque adeone mori miserum est?*<sup>5</sup>—very appropriate to one who had vowed that, if things turned out well, he would dance on the public stage the part of Turnus.<sup>6</sup> Hadrian used to say of the ill-fated Verus, whom he had adopted as his successor, *ostendent terris hunc tantum fata*.<sup>7</sup> Diocletian as he stabbed the prefect Aper to enforce his claim to the throne exclaimed, *gloriare, Aper, Aeneae magni dextra cadis*.<sup>8</sup> Clodius Albinus, destined to be the unsuccessful opponent of Septimius Severus, was fond of quoting at school, *arma amens capio*.<sup>9</sup>

Virgil's lines are equally at home on the lips of Roman emperors and of Christian saints. St. Augustine is continually quoting him: how he repents his youthful interest in the wanderings of Aeneas, forgetful of his own wanderings from God; his tears for Dido instead of for his own sins, and all the lure of pagan art, from which the Christian was bound to flee—*atque ipsius umbra Creusae!*<sup>10</sup> Fénelon could never read without admiring tears the noble words:

<sup>1</sup> Servius: dicitur autem ingenti adfectu hos versus pronuntiasse, cum privatim paucis praesentibus recitaret Augusto, nam recitavit voce optima.

<sup>2</sup> *Aen.* 6, 883. Donatus, 46: tres omnino libros recitavit: secundum videlicet, quartum, et sextum. sed hunc praecipue ob Octaviam: quae cum recitationi interesset, ad illos de filio suo versus, *tu Marcellus eris*, defecisse fertur; atque aegre refocillata, dena sestertia pro singulo versu Vergilio dari iussit. Cf. 43: pronuntiabat autem cum suavitate tum lenociniis miris.

<sup>3</sup> *Aen.* 1, 282; Suet. *Aug.* 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Aen.* 1, 207; Suet. *Cal.* 45.

<sup>5</sup> *Aen.* 12, 646; Suet. *Nero* 47.

<sup>6</sup> Suet. *Nero* 54.

<sup>7</sup> *Aen.* 6, 870; *Life of Helius*, by Spartianus, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Aen.* 10, 830; *Life of Numerianus*, by Vopiscus, 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Aen.* 2, 314; *Life*, by Capitolinus, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Aen.* 2, 772; *Confessions* 1, 13: tenere cogebar Aeneae nescio cujus errores, oblitus errorum meorum; et plorare Didonem mortuam, quia se occidit ob amorem; cum interea meipsum in his a te morientem, Deus vita mea, siccis oculis ferrem miser-

aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum  
finge deo, rebusque veni non asper egenis.<sup>1</sup>

And of the same couplet the virile Dryden wrote: "For my part, I am lost in the admiration of it; I condemn the world when I think of it, and myself when I translate it."<sup>2</sup> It was Virgil's words which sounded in the ears of Savonarola, leading him to forsake the world for a life of religion: *heu, fuge crudelis terras, fuge litus avarum*.<sup>3</sup> And Virgil's was the line sung with the *Benedictus* by the angel-choir when Paradise opened to Dante's raptured vision: *manibus o date lilia plenis*.<sup>4</sup>

And so on down to modern times, which furnish examples as numerous. How often in British statesmanship have Virgil's lines played a part, never perhaps more impressively than when Pitt, as he pleaded for the abolition of African slavery till morning light streamed through the windows of the House of Commons, prophetically cited the vivid lines:

nos ubi primus equis Oriens adflavit anhelis,  
illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.<sup>5</sup>

Then there is the curious chronicle of the *sortes Virgilianae*, from the days of the Roman emperors to the days of our Puritan fathers. From these young Hadrian learned that he was *missus in imperium magnum*.<sup>6</sup> Alexander Severus, consulting Virgil in the temple at Praeneste, when Heliogabalus was plotting against him, received the doubtful response: *si qua fata aspera rumpas, tu Marcellus eris*,<sup>7</sup> and in his youth his future rule had been predicted,

rimus. quid enim miserius misero, non miserante seipsum; et flente Didonis mortem, quae fiebat amando Aeneam; non flente autem mortem suam, quae fiebat non amando te? . . . jam vero unum et unum duo, duo et duo quattuor, odiosa cantio mihi erat; et dulcissimum spectaculum vanitatis, equus ligneus plenus armatis; et Trojae incendium, atque ipsius umbra Creusae.

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* 8, 364. This and other examples are cited from the eloquent and enthusiastic essay on Virgil by F. W. H. Myers, in *Essays Classical*, an appreciation which is itself a classic and to which every student of Virgil is deeply indebted.

<sup>2</sup> Dedication to his translation of the *Aeneid*.

<sup>3</sup> *Aen.* 3, 34; vide Milman's essay on Savonarola, p. 422.

<sup>4</sup> *Aen.* 6, 884; vide *Purg.* 30, 21.

<sup>5</sup> *Georg.* 1, 250; vide Rosebery's *Life of Pitt*, chap. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Aen.* 6, 812; vide *Life*, by Spartianus, 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Aen.* 6, 882; vide *Life*, by Lampridius, 4.

when he sought advice about his education: *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento*.<sup>1</sup> The first Gordian learned the fate of his son: *ostendent terris hunc tantum fata*.<sup>2</sup> The second Claudius learned of his own short reign (A.D. 268-270) in the line: *tertia dum Latio regnantem viderit aestas*,<sup>3</sup> but was consoled by the prophecy for his posterity, *his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono*.<sup>4</sup> The ill-fated Clodius Albinus was spurred on in his rash ambition for empire when as a tribune he consulted the Virgilian oracle in the temple of Apollo at Cumae: *his rem Romanam magno turbante tumultu Sistet eques*.<sup>5</sup> And so on down to modern times, once more, for the most impressive instance, when Charles I consulting Virgil in the Bodleian Library at Oxford on the outbreak of the civil war drew upon himself the tremendous curse pronounced by Dido upon the recreant Aeneas:

at bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,  
finibus extorris, complexu avolsus Iuli,  
auxilium inploret, videatque indigna suorum  
funera; nec cum se sub leges pacis iniquae  
tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur;  
sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus arena.<sup>6</sup>

It is true that Virgil's pre-eminence has not been undisputed. If Varius and Plotius had partly heeded his dying behest, and if Octavian had insisted on preserving only the three great books known to him from Virgil's own reading, we can well believe that there would never have been any dispute, that this superb fragment would have stood in all men's minds as the high-water mark of

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* 6, 848 ff.; *vide Life*, by Lampridius, 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Aen.* 6, 869; *vide Capitulinus, Gordiani Tres*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Aen.* 1, 265; *vide Life*, by Trebellius, 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Aen.* 1, 278; *vide Life*, by Trebellius, 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Aen.* 6, 857; *vide Life*, by Capitulinus, 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Aen.* 4, 615. This striking story, given by most commentators without reference, is to be found in *Memoirs of the Most Material Transactions in England, for the Last Hundred Years, Preceding the Revolution in 1688. Written at the Desire of the Late Queen Mary*, by James Welwood, M.D. (Physician to William III), London, 1749 (1st ed. 1700), pp. 90 ff. Dr. Welwood introduces the anecdote as follows: "Then befel him an Accident, which though a Trifle in it self, and that no Weight is to be laid upon any thing of that nature; yet since the best Authors, both Antient and Modern, have not thought it below the Majesty of History to mention the like, it may be the more excusable to insert it."

poetry, and the lost books would have been lamented far more than the lyrics of Sappho or the comedies of Menander.<sup>1</sup> The horror and pity of Book II strike a higher note than all the warfare of the *Iliad*, and a note new in poetry. The passion and tragedy of Book IV, the first love story in literature dealt with psychologically and sympathetically, place Virgil on a level with the greatest dramatists; you have to look to Aeschylus or Shakespeare for his equal. Here we may say of Virgil what he himself said of Pollio: *sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna cothurno*.<sup>2</sup> For the majesty and mystery of Book VI you seek in vain a parallel in all "the realms of gold"; no poetry reaches a higher level or sounds a loftier note than that sublime music blended of moral earnestness and religious awe, the stateliness of history and the charm of legend, an infinite tenderness for the pathos of life and a high faith in the divine spirit animating and directing all things to some great end.

These are the books for which Voltaire claimed a great superiority over the works of all the Greek poets.<sup>3</sup> It is safe to say that Virgil's hostile critics have been moved chiefly by the inevitable fact that he is not always up to his own highest level. The same thing is true to a much greater degree of Shakespeare and Milton, and everybody knows that *quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*. We should never forget Virgil's own dissatisfaction with his unfinished work and his pathetic wish to have it destroyed.

Other objections to our poet arise from misconceptions. There are three main accusations: one as to his alleged plagiarism, the second as to his alleged flattery of Augustus, the third as to the alleged weakness of character in his hero. I trust that even this brief paper will serve to answer such ill-considered charges.

To the charge of plagiarism Virgil himself made the best reply, when accused of borrowing from Homer, that it is easier to steal

<sup>1</sup> Donatus, 46: tres omnino libros recitavit, secundum videlicet, quartum, et sextum—and 52: qui cum gravari morbo sese sentiret, scrinia saepe et magna instantia petivit, crematurus Aeneida; quibus negatis, testamento comburi jussit, ut rem inemendatam imperfectamque. verum Tucca et Varius monuerunt id Augustum non permissurum.

<sup>2</sup> *Ec.* 8, 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Dictionnaire philosophique*, s.v. "Epopée": "Il me semble que le second livre de l'*Enéide*, le quatrième, et le sixième, sont autant au-dessus de tous les poètes grecs et de tous les latins, sans exceptions."

his club from Hercules than a verse from Homer.<sup>1</sup> We recall Voltaire's witty saying: *Homère a fait Virgile, dit-on; si cela est, c'est sans doute son plus bel ouvrage.*<sup>2</sup> "People accuse Virgil of plagiarizing," exclaimed Tennyson,<sup>3</sup> but if a man made it his own, there was no harm in that; look at the great poets, Shakespeare included.<sup>4</sup> Virgil had absorbed and assimilated all the culture of his time, he knew intimately the great poets, Latin as well as Greek, but his reading he had made his own, and the echoes come back with a subtle transmutation of sound, the reflections appear with a delicate enrichment in his setting.<sup>5</sup> We are told that the moonlight of Virgil is pale beside the bright sun of Homer, shining in the glad morning of the world;<sup>6</sup> and we reply that moonlight too has its beauty, a pensive charm, a melancholy grace, a tenderness and mystery that have as potent an appeal to some moods. Why compare such different things? The moon, however, shines with borrowed light! Homer himself, we have come to see, is the product of a long and highly artificial culture, the successor of an extinct dynasty of bards; as Kipling tells us:

When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,  
He'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea;  
An' what he thought 'e might require  
'E went an' took, the same as me.

"Both argosies," says Professor Mackail,<sup>7</sup> are freighted with the treasure of many sunken ships."<sup>8</sup>

An answer to the charge of flattery is found first in the spirit of the time, and second in the really sublime ideal which lay behind Virgil's glorification of Caesar.

In the reign of Augustus appeared a phenomenon unique in history: the formation of a state religion, introduced without violence, accepted without revolt, and practised with a fervor and spontaneity which give no ground for accusing the people of a

<sup>1</sup> Donatus, 64: *facilius esse Herculi clavam quam Homero versum surripere.*

<sup>2</sup> Appendix to the *Henriade*, "Essai sur la poésie épique," chap. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoir of Tennyson*, by his son, Vol. II, p. 385.

<sup>4</sup> See some very suggestive and discriminating remarks on *ce mode d'imitation eclectique* in Sainte-Beuve, *Nouveaux lundis*, t. XI, "Œuvres de Virgile."

<sup>5</sup> For instance, by Andrew Lang, in his *Letters on Literature*.

<sup>6</sup> "Virgil and Virgilianism," in the *Classical Review*, May, 1908.

shameful compliance. In the cult of the Caesars were fused many old and widespread religious ideas; the emperor became the personification of Rome whose benefits were summed up in the two words, *pax Romana*.<sup>1</sup> This cult became a great unifying influence, it helped to put the element of unity and universality into the popular idea of divinity, and to develop the conception of an orderly and ethical government of the universe. It unquestionably played a great part in preparing the world for Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

The worship of Peace and of Augustus as giver of peace seems hardly unnatural when we think of the terrible century which culminated at Actium, with its twelve civil wars, conceived of by Virgil as a punishment inflicted by the wrath of heaven on the sins of men. Rome had turned aside from her great destiny, and now was being regenerated by a heaven-sent leader who was to usher in a new age of peace and righteousness.<sup>3</sup>

Virgil's worship of Augustus is not the flattery of a court poet, but the veneration and awe of a poetic and prophetic soul contemplating the great man who occupied a unique place in history—descendant of Aeneas and his spiritual counterpart, with a like divine mission to accomplish on a vaster scale: to extend the blessings of peace and civilization and religion to all the world, to lead Rome on to the fulfilment of her larger destiny, to crown her political empire with a higher spiritual dominion.

Augustus is divine first of all as the giver of peace. *Deus nobis haec otia fecit* (sings Tityrus in the first Eclogue), *namque erit ille mihi semper deus*. The fourth Eclogue is an exultant *Gloria* over the new hope of the world, the Golden Age about to be born. The first Georgic closes with a magnificent and indignant lament over the crime and madness of the civil wars, and a fervent prayer to Rome's guardian gods to preserve the young prince of peace till he shall have accomplished his work of regeneration. In the great prophecy of *Aeneid* I. it is not the gorgeous line of Rome's martial

<sup>1</sup> Seneca *De prov.* 4, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Duruy, *Hist. des Romains*, t. IV, p. 18, and an interesting paper by A. P. Ball on "The Theological Utility of the Caesar Cult," in the *Classical Journal*, May, 1910.

<sup>3</sup> See the magnificent peroration of the first Georgic, and the profoundly suggestive essay by Professor Conway on "The Messianic Idea in Virgil," in the *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. V.



triumphs that impresses one most in the stately verses, but the sweet and solemn ending in a paean of peace:

aspera tunc positis mitescent saecula bellis,  
cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus  
jura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis  
claudentur Belli portae.<sup>1</sup>

So in Book VI it is not Rome's warrior heroes in that grand procession of prophetic figures who attract the chief attention—it is the heroes of peace:

quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat,  
quique pii vates et Phoebos digna locuti,  
inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artis,  
quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.<sup>2</sup>

And the chief spur to Aeneas in his great adventure is the vision of his illustrious descendant, who is to bring back the Golden Age:

hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,  
Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet  
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva  
Saturno quondam.<sup>3</sup>

Horace in like manner sang of Augustus the peacemaker:

quo nihil majus meliusve terris  
fata donavere bonique divi  
nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum  
tempora priscum.<sup>4</sup>

The second Aeneas [says Duruy] passes tranquil and mild through the midst of a disturbed world, calming the passions which he no longer shares, bringing back upon earth the order which the gods maintain in heaven, and carrying in his hands the destinies of the new Rome, of which he will be in his turn the guardian god, *divus Augustus*.<sup>5</sup>

Ideas and ideals like these are most appealing and suggestive when conveyed in the medium of poetry, but we find them both implicit and explicit in the sober prose of history. Time would fail to give merely a list of references. The impression produced by the character and purpose of Augustus confronts us everywhere.

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* 1, 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Aen.* 6, 791.

<sup>3</sup> *Aen.* 6, 661.

<sup>4</sup> *Odes* 4, 2, 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. des Romains*, t. IV, p. 173.

"Not only from the greatness of his empire but also from the greatness of his character was he the first man to be called Augustus," says Philo the Jew;<sup>1</sup> and in Josephus the Jew we find full expression of the belief in the divine destiny of Rome, from the lips of that King Agrippa whom St. Paul almost persuaded to become a Christian.<sup>2</sup>

"He proclaimed peace and good-will," says Appian, and on his statue in the Forum was inscribed: "Peace, long disturbed, he re-established on land and sea."<sup>3</sup> His own words on the monument at Ancyra state briefly:

When victorious I spared the lives of all citizens; foreign nations which could safely be pardoned I preferred to preserve rather than destroy.

And again:

In the Julian Curia was placed a golden shield which by its inscription bore witness that it was given to me by the senate and Roman people on account of my valor, clemency, justice, and piety.<sup>4</sup>

Coins of his reign bear the grateful inscription, *civibus servatis* or *ob cives servatos*, and an inscription speaks of "the whole world pacified."<sup>5</sup> The *Ara Pacis Augustae* decreed by the senate after his campaigns in Spain and Gaul, and consecrated in the Campus Martius in 9 B.C., seems like an effort to perpetuate Virgilian ideals in stone; the beautiful reliefs on the front symbolized that Golden Age of peace and plenty which is the main motive in the Georgics and Bucolics, and represented Aeneas introducing his gods to Italy,

<sup>1</sup> *De virtutibus et legatione ad Caium* 21: ὁ διὰ μέγθος ἡγεμονίας αὐτοκράτορος ὁμοῦ καὶ καλοκάγαθας πρῶτος ὀνομασθεὶς Σεβαστὸς; quoted by Merivale, *Hist. of Romans*, Vol. IV, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* 2, 16. Agrippa's attempt to dissuade the Jews from their last, mad struggle against Rome—"for it is impossible that so vast an empire should have been organized without God's providence." Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4, 74.

<sup>3</sup> Appian *Bell. civ.* 5, 130: κατήγγελλέ τε εἰρήνην καὶ εὐθυμίαν . . . τὴν εἰρήνην ἐστασιασμένην ἐκ πολλοῦ συνέστησε κατὰ τε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν.

<sup>4</sup> *Mon. Anc.* 3: Victorque omnibus superstitibus civibus peperci; externas gentes quibus tuto ignosci potuit, conservare quam excidere malui. . . . 34: Clupeusque aureus in curia Julia positus, quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiae justitiae pietatis causa testatum est per ejus clupe inscriptionem.

<sup>5</sup> *CIL*, VI, 1527: *pacato orbe terrarum*.



type of Augustus as lawgiver and religious reformer—the theme of the *Aeneid*.<sup>1</sup>

There is no good which men can desire of the gods [says Velleius], none that the gods can bestow on men, none that can be conceived in wishes, none that can be comprised in perfect good-fortune, which Augustus did not realize to the state, to the Roman people, and to the world. The civil wars were ended, peace was recalled, energy was restored to the laws, authority to the courts of justice, and majesty to the senate. The cultivation of the land was revived, reverence was restored to religion, security to men's persons, and to every man safe enjoyment of his property.<sup>2</sup>

And Pliny in an eloquent and memorable passage speaks of Italy as

the land of all lands nursing alike and mother, chosen by divine providence to make heaven itself more illustrious, to unite the scattered nations, to humanize their religions, to draw together the savage and discordant tongues of so many peoples by the gift of a common language into communication with one another, to give humanity to men, and in short to become the one fatherland of all races in the whole world.<sup>3</sup>

The answer to the third accusation, as to the weakness of the character of Aeneas, has been so completely made by Professor Rand in his admirable essay on "Virgil and the Drama"<sup>4</sup>—one of the most illuminating contributions to Virgilian criticism made in America—that I cannot do better than refer to him.

He shows that the *Aeneid* is constructed of two tragedies, that of Dido and that of Turnus, both victims of fate, but fate conceived in a new way, nobler than that of the Attic drama. This Virgilian conception is set forth in the sixth book, which separates the two tragedies; fate is the march of progress toward "one far-off divine event," and Aeneas is its chosen instrument. Dido and Turnus

<sup>1</sup> So of the *ludi saeculares*, Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, Vol. V, p. 82, says: "We might almost think that the *ludi saeculares* (18 B.C.) were merely a fragment of the *Aeneid* in outward show, so wholly Virgilian was their conception."

<sup>2</sup> Velleius 2, 89; cf. Florus 4, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Plin. *N.H.* 3, 39: Nec ignoro ingrati ac segnis animi existimari posse merito, si obiter atque in transcurso ad hunc modum dicatur terra omnium terrarum alumna eadem et parens, numine deum electa quae caelum ipsum clarius faceret, sparsa congregaret imperia ritusque molliret et tot populorum discordes ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret ad colloquia et humanitatem homini daret, breviterque una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria fieret.

<sup>4</sup> *Classical Journal*, Vol. IV.

oppose this fate, and are crushed by it, the one sinning through weakness and the other through violence. Aeneas sins and suffers too—he is no mere cold-blooded, hard-hearted automaton, or marionette of destiny; but triumphs finally by his self-sacrificing devotion to the will of heaven.

Turnus is a crude barbarian contrasted with the courtesy and chivalry of Aeneas. The figure of Aeneas seems colorless only to those who look for a romantic or warlike youth in an epic hero; his is a much nobler heroism, that of the Stoic philosopher, that of the Christian saint, the man who endures and resigns himself to the will of God.<sup>1</sup> He plunges desperately into the fight for his fatherland, though he knows the struggle is vain, and seeks to die with his countrymen: he is the champion of a lost cause—the highest type of militant hero. Into the war in Italy he is drawn sorely against his will: he comes as a pilgrim, not as an adventurer;<sup>2</sup> the conflict is forced upon him by the blind violence of Turnus (*violentia Turni*). Our indignant pity for Dido and for Turnus should open our eyes rather than blind us to the consummate art of Virgil and to his own deep human sympathy that call forth such response in us; the poet that created these characters as the chief opponents to the high destiny of Aeneas (*Romanae stirpis origo*) did not intend his hero to be a mere figure-head, nor could he have failed from lack of ability to make him a real and commanding figure: we need to study more closely the hero and Virgil's conception and purpose. Aeneas foreshadows the most enlightened thought of our own day as to the crime and the needlessness of war (*insania belli*); and for Virgil, the first and most impassioned preacher of peace, will be found a shrine in that Temple of Universal Peace which our twentieth century is only beginning to conceive and to construct.

To Virgil as much as to Euripides belongs Aristotle's epithet *τραγικώτατος*, "most tragic of poets." He sounded a new note in literature and fathered a new word: since his time *pietas* has meant pity as well as piety, the idea of humanity has been added to the idea of duty. When we look on those representations of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Duruy, *Hist. des Romains*, t. IV, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Aen.* 8, 29: Aeneas tristi turbatus pectora bello; 11, 108 ff.; 12, 109; etc.

the crucified Savior which the Italians call *pietà*—symbolizing all the tragedy of life and the divine consolation that transfigures it—we remember Virgil, who first gave expression to the feeling we think of as Christian, a tenderness for all unhappy things and a faith that all sorrow serves some higher end. This is really his chief characteristic, best suggested in his best known phrase, those words of haunting, untranslatable charm—*lacrimae rerum*. Pious Aeneas is not merely the type of a righteous king, like Tennyson's Arthur, but a Prince of Peace, a sort of Messiah, destined to bring not only religion and civilization into Italy, but also, through his descendants in the fulness of time, a new spirit upon earth of peace and good-will to men.

That *pietas* is Virgil's chief motive who will doubt when he recalls the most affecting passages in his poetry, from that early pastoral lament for Gallus down through all his verse, in great episodes or in "pathetic half-lines"—the tragedy of Troy, the doom of Dido, the moving story of Orpheus and Eurydice, the tears of Hector's Andromache, the dirge of young Marcellus, the parting of Pallas and Evander and the grief for Pallas untimely slain, the heroic death of Nisus and Euryalus, the mourning for the maid Camilla, and the indignant pity for savage but gallant Turnus, falling a victim to that destiny which for Virgil means progress and enlightenment.

Nullus erit in illis scriptis liber [says Seneca, writing to a young man who was consoling himself by turning Virgil into Greek] qui non plurima varietatis humanae incertorumque casuum et lacrimarum ex alia atque alia causa fluentium exempla tibi suggerat.<sup>1</sup>

In all the carnage of the later books, wherein half-heartedly Virgil follows his father Homer *non passibus aequis*, the lines that have the true, authentic note are those of a pity and tenderness unknown to Homer. The carnage of the second book is not at all Homeric; that incomparable description of the death-agony of Troy is a strain of higher mood than all the battle-scenes of the *Iliad*; the tragedy and terror are suffused with a yearning sympathy that is Virgil's own.

Since Virgil, then, occupies so unique a place in literature, in history, and in the curriculum, how unique is the opportunity of

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Polybium de consolatione* 11, 5.

the teacher of Virgil! The instructor in the preparatory school sometimes envies the college teacher his wider range of class reading; but I think that no one who has the good fortune to teach Virgil can rightly envy any other lot. The highest Roman literature falls somewhat short of Virgil, and his position, as I have already said, is in no way affected by the general superiority of Greek over Roman literature. The nobility and earnestness of Lucretius are deeply imbued with an indignant pessimism in strong contrast with Virgil's melancholy but loving tenderness. The exquisite grace of Horace's odes has still something exotic and artificial, something not quite sincere, while his most earnest satires and epistles rarely rise to the heights of poetry, and nearly always wind up with a somewhat mocking laugh. The passion and power of Catullus, unmatched in some few lines, do not make up for his consummate selfishness and his sins against decency. The magnificent prose of Cicero and Seneca—both magnificent though whole worlds apart—fails of some of its due effect from the evident weaknesses of character these men display. (The magnificent prose of Tacitus, with its premonitions of the later Latin of St. Augustine or the Vulgate Bible, is itself steeped in the poetry of Virgil.) But in Virgil we have not only "one who uttered nothing base," but one whose life was as pure as his writings.<sup>1</sup> The student of Virgil is keeping the very best of company. He echoes Horace's warm outburst on meeting Virgil with Plotius and Varius (the friends who became his literary executors, and to whom we owe the *Aeneid*):

animae qualis neque candidiores  
terra tulit, neque quis me sit devinctior alter.<sup>2</sup>

A white soul indeed, burning at white heat with love for all things beautiful, admiration for all things noble, sympathy for all things

<sup>1</sup> "But Virgil's songs are pure, except that horrid one beginning *formosum pastor Corydon*" (Byron, *Don Juan*, 1, 42). The gossip of the pseudo-Donatus recalls the scandal-mongering Suetonius, to whom good critics have attributed this *Life*, and is evidently made up from Virgil's poems or alleged poems. The anecdote about the punning nickname given him at school—*Parthenias* (*virginalis*), like that given to Milton at Cambridge, "the lady of Christ's"—has a far more authentic sound, and tells us just what we should expect about his pure and shy young manhood.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.* 1, 6, 40.

pitiful! In reading him we breathe a higher air and are illumined by a purer light; it is like gazing on his own sun-drenched Italian landscape with its ineffable charm (which he has sung as no other poet has sung) from some airy height of Father Apennine; we are in an atmosphere like that of his Elysian fields, lighted by a radiance all their own:

largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit  
purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, few students continue their study of Latin beyond Virgil, and pathetically few get any taste of the great Greek poets; so to many he furnishes the only connecting link in the long chain of influence which binds us to the past. He is the one "magic casement" through which may be had a glimpse of those "faery lands forlorn" of the antique world. He is indeed the "golden branch amid the shadows," the open sesame to that sacred realm of the dead. To get some vision, even the dimmest, of this classic past through the eye of its noblest poet is worth all the arduous labor of the *gradus ad Parnassum*—that *difficilis ascensus*—the drudgery of Latin forms and syntax, and all the hard campaigning with Caesar in Gaul.

Most schoolboys, I believe, are interested in the tale that Virgil has to tell; but every student who is at all ready to read him should get something more; he should get some realization that he is dealing with great poetry. Adequate preparation for beginning Virgil I should define to be a correct knowledge of Latin forms, a reasonable approximation to correct pronunciation and quantitative reading, and some knowledge of ancient history and myth—some conception of what Greece and Rome signify to the world. The Virgil course should be, then, above all things, what Professor Norton used to call his Dante class, a course in poetry, and the student should never be allowed to forget that Virgil is a supreme poet: *maximus vates* (as Seneca says) *et velut divino ore instinctus*.<sup>2</sup> St. Augustine expresses the ideal:

Vergilium propterea parvuli legunt, ut videlicet poeta magnus omniumque praeclarissimus atque optimus teneris ebibitus animis non facile oblivione

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* 6, 640.

<sup>2</sup> *De brev. vitae* 9, 2.

possit aboleri, secundum illud Horati: "quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu."<sup>3</sup>

The very first step toward this ideal is the reading aloud of the verse—reading, not scanning—in a way to bring out some of that music of "the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man." This seems an obvious remark, but there are teachers who neither read themselves nor hear their pupils read, who confine themselves to translation and to grammar. The music is inseparable from the poetry, and Tennyson's description of the Virgilian hexameter is no exaggeration: it is a different harmony from the "strong-winged music of Homer," it is the Greek hexameter romanized and made a new thing, with Roman stateliness added to the Greek beauty. The noblest English verse can give no suggestion of its peculiar magnificence, its sweep and resonance and melody. The versification alone is a sufficient reason for the inadequacy of all English translations of Virgil. It would be a pity indeed if a student should translate the lines and never get a notion of the glorious music of the hexameter, "which in Virgil's hands became such an instrument as the world has never since beheld for expressing and arousing all the nobler emotions—*arma, amor, rectitudo*, as Dante classifies them."<sup>4</sup>

Virgilian grammar presents no added difficulties to the student fresh from Caesar or Cicero; rather he finds in Latin poetry a much more natural and flexible mode of expression than in prose; and the time hitherto devoted to grammar may now be given to more important things.

If the pupil has been trained, as he should be, from the beginning to pronounce Latin quantitatively, not slighting unaccented long syllables in order to put exaggerated stress on the accented syllable, as our modern mode of English speech tempts us to do, there will be little difficulty with the metrical reading.<sup>5</sup> Pupils so trained need never hear of the much-debated ictus, if they once grasp the difference between quantitative and accentual verse; they might

<sup>3</sup> *De civ. dei* 1, 3.

<sup>4</sup> A. J. Butler, *Forerunners of Dante*, p. vi.

<sup>5</sup> Professor Knapp has some excellent remarks on this subject in the *Classical Weekly*, Vol. III.



even dispense with that most unpoetical and mechanical process of scanning—except on paper, for the enlightenment of their teachers at examination time.<sup>1</sup> Without hoping to read Latin verse as the Romans did, we need not despair of reading it in a way that would not set a Roman's teeth on edge. Let us consider that Shakespeare would hardly recognize as English our modern rendering of his lines; but do we get no music out of them? Let us consider too that generations of Englishmen have read Virgil as so much accentual English verse, and have enjoyed and appreciated him to a degree that we in America are only beginning to approach. Our pronunciation with its Italian vowel-sounds is an immense gain in sonorousness and melody, and if we can only have due regard for quantity and refrain from undue attention to accent—which never in Southern Europe has such stress as our Northern tongues give to it—we are getting within hearing-distance of that "ocean-roll of rhythm." Distant though we may be from the sea that laves

The Latian coast, where sprung the epic war,  
Arms and the Man, whose reascending star  
Rose o'er an empire,<sup>2</sup>

we may catch its faint echo in the sea-shell which

Remembers its august abodes  
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

"Englishmen," complained Tennyson, "will spoil verses by scanning when they are reading, and they confound accent and quantity."<sup>3</sup> "Indeed, the American," says another Englishman, "seems to be the only modern left who can pronounce, let us say, *lābōratory* or *ōrdināry* with regard both to accent and to quantity."<sup>4</sup> In Tennyson's *Life* we shall find, as well as in his poems, many suggestive hints as to the quantitative reading of verse, and many fine appreciations of Virgil. It is of Tennyson that F. W. H. Myers wrote: "Surely not philology nor history, but such a vital sense

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bennett's pamphlet is a most helpful introduction to such reading: *The Quantitative Reading of Latin Poetry*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Byron, *Childe Harold*, 4, 174.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoir of Tennyson*, by his son, Vol. II, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Allbutt in an address on "The Speaking of Latin," *Proceedings of the Third General Meeting of the Classical Association*, London, 1906.

of the spirit of classical poetry as he possessed is the true measure of antiquity and the flower of the past."<sup>1</sup> His own metrical experiments are perhaps the best start for one about to read Latin verse. Swinburne also has used classical meters with admirable musical effect. The student who can read such English poems has only the difficulty of elision to overcome in order to read Latin poetry with success—provided he has had the proper training in quantitative pronunciation. The lack of such training is a serious defect. High-school principals rarely put French and German classes into the hands of persons who cannot pronounce those tongues with reasonable correctness, but it sometimes seems as if they thought that beginning Latin can be taught by anybody.

Given the daily realization that Virgil is at least verse, the student may come to feel that Virgil is poetry, and great poetry, partly through his innate taste and partly through his teacher's comments by the way. Some attention will be given in translation to poetic diction, the varied vocabulary, the constant use of metaphor, the order and emphasis of words, and their larger meanings and associations; and some attempt will be made to suggest the wealth of the original in changing its gold into the silver or copper of current English. Readers are always charmed, I think, by the musical effect of alliteration and onomatopoeia, in which Virgil's verse is so surprisingly rich; they can be interested in the figures of speech—despite the terrible names—which play so large a part in poetry; and if they have any literary sense at all, they must take pleasure in some reminder of the abundant store of literary parallels that help to show the vast influence and inspiration which Virgil has exercised, as well as of the treasures of earlier poetry which he did not *borrow*, but absorbed, assimilated, and made his own. As an introduction to Virgil, there is no reason why even the high-school student should not read and appreciate the beautiful chapter in Professor Mackail's *Latin Literature*.

The plea has often been made for reading in school parts at least of the last six books of the *Aeneid*, and there are encouraging signs of a movement in that direction. Some schools read the whole poem. It is also to be desired that pupils should get a taste of

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of Tennyson*, by his son, Vol. II, p. 482.

Virgil in his *Eclogues*, if only for the sake of their extraordinary influence on later literature; as Professor Woodberry charmingly says:

They are a nest of the singing birds of all lands; as one reads, voices of Italy, France, and England blend with the familiar lines, and a choiring vision rises before him of the world's poets in their youth framing their lips to the smooth-sliding syllables.<sup>1</sup>

Pupils should not be cheated out of the fourth Eclogue, or the tenth. Above all they should read at least the great passages of the *Georgics*, Virgil's most finished and original work, the earliest and greatest of nature poems, singing the majestic praise of Italy in the most patriotic and eloquent strains ever uttered. "Not the muses of Greece," says Andrew Lang, "but his own Casmenae, song-maidens of Italy, have inspired him here, and his music is blown through a reed of the Mincius."<sup>2</sup>

We complain of lack of time, and justly; but if only the properly qualified students were admitted to Virgil, how much could be done! We waste our time and that of our classes over incompetent pupils. Democracy is a good thing, even in school, but there is no democracy of intellect; all men are not born free and equal in mind, and the chief need of our education is the encouragement of intellectual distinction.

Finally, the teacher will seek to suggest from time to time that the *Aeneid* is an epic "where more is meant than meets the ear"—of the beginner; that besides being a fine narrative, telling a heroic tale drawn from the old legends, and telling it with the utmost beauty of diction and versification, the *Aeneid* has three elements—faith, patriotism, and humanity—constantly appearing to the eye that looks beneath the surface, which make it a poem of religious, of national, and of universal appeal. Aeneas is a man of destiny (*fato profugus, fatalis*), whose divine mission is to bring religion and civilization into Italy and to found the Roman race (*Romanam condere gentem*)—the chosen people<sup>3</sup> who are destined to communicate

<sup>1</sup> *Great Writers*, "Virgil."

<sup>2</sup> *Letters on Literature*.

<sup>3</sup> The idea of the Romans as a chosen people, like the Hebrews, with a special genius for religion, is found in Cicero. *Vide N.D.* 2, 8: si conferre volumus nostra cum externis, ceteris rebus aut pares aut etiam inferiores reperiemur, religione, id est cultu deorum, multo superiores. *De harusp. responso* 19: quam volumus licet

to all mankind the blessings of law and of peace (*pacisque imponere morem*). Aeneas is not only the ancestor of the Caesars, but the type of Augustus, who, after the terrible century of civil war in which Rome's career of foreign conquest had culminated, had restored peace to the exhausted world, and was engaged in restoring the old Italian morality and religion that had made Rome mistress of the world. It is Rome (we cannot too often repeat) that is the real hero of the *Aeneid*; the "ocean-roll of rhythm sounds forever of imperial Rome," and Virgil's ideal of Rome makes this the greatest of epic themes—as great as Milton's (to "justify the ways of God to men") or Dante's (to glorify the Catholic Church), both somewhat spoiled for us by a dogmatic theology, both somewhat less Christian than the pagan poem; greater far than the themes of Homer, that heroic action and that romantic adventure which are the imaginative ideal of a less reflective age. Aeneas' chief characteristic is piety—faith in the gods and submission to their will, and faithfulness to all his duties in life. He is not so much a hero of action as the personification of the great Roman virtue *patientia*, the type of the peace-loving ruler and philosophic statesman. He has survived his country's downfall, the loss of his wife and his father; he is an exile preserved against his will to be the instrument of a great destiny, that of grafting on the rude and rugged Italian stock the Greek culture and humane religion of the divinely descended Trojan line—the union which is to produce in the fulness of time that imperial Rome which shall be the righteous and peaceful mother of all mankind.

But Virgil's appeal is more than religious and national; it is universal; and this fact is due to his qualities as a man and a poet. With all his love of antiquity, he is so modern in spirit that his verse—antiquarian, legendary, pagan, and Roman as it is—comes home to the twentieth century fraught with more meaning perhaps than

*ipsi nos amemus; tamen nec numero Hispanos, nec robore Gallos, nec callidate Poenos, nec artibus Graecos, nec denique hoc ipso hujus gentis ac terrae domestico nativoque sensu Italos ipsos ac Latinos, sed pietate et religione, atque hac una sapientia, quod deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernarique perspeximus, omnes gentes nationesque superavimus.* Ferrero says that Boissier was the first to discover that the *Aeneid* is a religious poem, but the comments of Macrobius are largely concerned with this aspect of the poem, and he puts into the mouth of Vettius the remark: promitto fore ut Vergilius noster pontifex maximus adseratur (*Sat.* 1, 24, 16).

it bore to the first. His universal appeal is due to his *pietas*, chief characteristic of the poet as of his hero—that sympathy which broods over everything, inanimate nature as well as human life, giving a deeper meaning to his words, suffusing them with a subtle, pathetic charm, a wistful tenderness, that are the very essence of poetry and of humanity. Thus his epic has come to be almost an allegory of human life, and the adventures of Aeneas can never cease to have a moving significance and a heart-felt appeal.

On every page of Virgil those who read between the lines will find the sturdy morality of the old Roman religion (*Romana potens Itala virtute propago*), the sense of divine guidance in the humblest of human affairs as well as in the great movements of history (*non haec sine numine divom eveniunt*);<sup>1</sup> they will find the enthusiastic patriotism of the Roman imperialist, believing in his race as the chosen people and in the Caesars as the ordained leaders of mankind; and they will find also that deep human sympathy which transcends the bounds of creed and sect, the barriers of race and time and language, that makes men one in the solemn sense of the mystery of life, the pathos of things human, and the high faith in a divine purpose which gives meaning and worth to everything.

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* 2, 777.

